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EDITORIAL

WE ended our *July* Editorial on GOD'S WORD WRITTEN by saying that a fatal division between God's Word and man's word is introduced into Holy Scripture by non-Catholic Biblical scholarship, owing to its insistent denial of inerrancy. The elimination of this division can only be effected by the authority of Christ in his Church, under the leading of the Holy Spirit. In the long run and finally what is God's Word to men and what God's Word says to them can only be decided by the teaching *magisterium* of the Church, divinely safeguarded from error.

In the long run and finally; for the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to the definitive decisions of the teaching Church. The whole process, within the divine Society, by which the meaning of God's Word and its fuller implications have been reduced to definition during the course of the Church's life through the centuries, is governed by the Holy Spirit, who indwells the Church. In accordance with Christ's promise he leads the members of the Mystical Body 'into all truth', and by doing so builds up Christ's mind in them.

For the *depositum fidei*, the truth which Christ committed to the care of his Church, embodied in the inspired Scriptures, is the possession of all its members, and each of us, according to his status in the body, has his particular responsibility towards it. Thus every member of Christ in his Church, from the Pope to the humblest learner, scholars and theologians together with the simple and unlettered, the busy and preoccupied, even the uninterested, every baptized Christian, belongs primarily to the *ecclesia discens*; we are all here to be taught the word of Life by the Spirit. This learning is under the guidance of the *ecclesia docens*, the teaching Church. But the teaching Church, like any good teacher, is only a guide in her teaching, an inspiration, a stimulus; the work of learning, if it is to bear fruit, must be done primarily by the learner, and the learner must learn always by docility and obedience what the Spirit has to teach. This process of learning, of being led by the Holy Spirit into all truth, is basically a personal matter; it takes place in the mind and heart of each individual member of the Body of Christ.

But it also forms, by communication, a common mind, a common possession of truth by the faithful as a whole. This we call the mind of the Church, which contains the truths of revelation explicitly held and understood. It also possesses, through the indwelling Spirit, a continuous insight into those truths, by worship, meditation and study. These activities within the body bring to the surface, from time to time, by the penetration of faith, what has hitherto been implicit and unrecognized in them. In this way, residing in the minds of the faithful, at any period of the Church's history, besides the truths of faith, which are recognized as such, there are many ideas, opinions, speculations and beliefs, arising from the Faith, which are not *de fide*, but are piously believed.

From time to time one of these may come to be accepted in the common mind of the Church, by a divinely guided instinct, as being so clearly implicit in the truths of God's revelation already *de fide*, that they must be held to be themselves revealed. The task of decision in this matter lies with the *ecclesia docens*, the episcopate throughout the world in union with the Holy See. When the episcopate teaches by its universal consent that a truth is contained in the deposit of Faith, this truth is said to be taught by the ordinary *magisterium* of the Church. What is universally believed in the mind of the Church, by the divinely guided instinct of the faithful, comes, in this way, to be universally taught by its divinely guided teaching authority, diffused throughout the world. A further step in this process occurs when it is *defined* by the supreme authority of the Church, through a General Council confirmed by the Pope, or by the Pope alone, himself defining with that authority.

The whole body of the faithful in the Church then, possesses the Scriptures, the inspired record of God's revelation, and continuously and in every age ponders upon what it possesses, and lives by its pondering. In this pondering the voice of the teaching Church, proclaiming the gospel, must be our guide at whatever level in the Church's life our pondering takes place. At one level the scholars are at work, making use of the strict empirical methods of numerous branches of scientific knowledge and research; archaeology, linguistics, history and literature; the study of ancient civilizations, their ways of thought and modes of expression. The object of this kind of pondering on the Word of God

is to establish with exactness its original text and to interpret the meaning of the text as it stood in the minds of the sacred writers. For from the Scriptures thus presented to them the theologians at another level draw the material of their particular science; they ponder upon the deposit of Faith. The formulations of the Church in her dogmatic definitions, like those of the theologians whose science prepares the ground for them, are not the Faith itself, they are *articuli fidei*, articulations of the profound *mysterium fidei* contained in the Scriptures. They are designed to render that mystery more easily perceptible to the weakness of human understanding.

These articulations, when *de fide*, are of course immune from error, but they do not exhaust the fullness of the truth, which is the revelation itself; they are directive and admonitory, guiding the minds of the faithful, keeping them on the high road of truth and from straying down the bye-roads of false emphasis and error. The fullness of truth is contained in the revealed mystery itself, which no man can fully penetrate.

At a third level the faithful ponder the mystery of faith contained in Scripture in liturgy and worship. Here the work of the scholar aids them and the theologian is their guide. Yet ultimately the penetration into, and the deepening understanding of, the mystery of faith is a personal growth, within the life of the Mystical Body, each person contributing his quota to the whole. This is what we mean by growth in holiness; the power of the unction of the Holy Spirit, causing by its inflow the presence of sanctifying grace and the issue from this of the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity perfected by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The chief material, so to say, upon which the Holy Spirit works in our souls is the truth communicated to us by God's revelation in the written Word, confirmed and guided by the Word spoken, the Apostolic preaching of the Church. Hence the meditative reading of the Scriptures, *lectio divina*, is the unique groundwork of sanctity; by it we penetrate into, and grow in understanding of, the mystery of our redemption, and its fruit will be our preaching of that mystery with power by the example of our lives.

ON READING THE BIBLE: II

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, O.P.

AS we have seen in the first half of this article the Old Testament ends, apart from the historical interlude of the Machabees, with the Prophets and their vision of all in God's hands. The worst that could happen, destruction, deportation, or death, is understood, as punishment from God. It is a marvellous vision, all the more so, first of all, for being in our world, and very much in our world; for the prophetic career is like any other, with its ups and downs. The book of *Jonas*, for instance ('Dove'; but also 'Destroyer'), shows us some of the downs.

We are told that Jonas has a message for Nineveh. Now no one likes to go into a strange town, especially with unpleasant messages; so Jonas runs away in a ship. There is a storm; the sailors cast lots to find the unlucky one; and the lot falls, of course, upon Jonas. He is thrown overboard, at his own request, in fact; as the waters close over his head he must think, 'At least, it's the end of that message.' But no, a great fish comes up and gulps him down; carries him in his stomach for three days—while Jonas sings a little song of distress and trust—but when God tells it, coughs him up on the shore. Jonas gets up, and goes to Nineveh this time; prophesies its destruction in a few days; and then waits outside the city to see it happen. But his preaching is successful; the Ninevites repent, as is intended all along; God, of course, does not destroy them: and, it seems, cannot understand why Jonas is so piqued. He grows him a shady plant—actually the castor-oil plant—and then destroys it with a worm, to remove one pique by the other. He did not want his little plant destroyed: but the city; with all the children! And, God adds, so many innocent animals!

The Prophets' vision is in this world then, as we see; but does not end there; in the vision of Isaias, for instance, where he sees God between two burning lights, the *seraphim*, each with 'six wings': the sun, and the full moon, perhaps, facing it, at each end of the sky, with the 'cross' halo they have in our eyes like

pairs of wings above and below, and one out on each side. With the five planets we can see, they may be the seven Rulers or archangels; not just seen as heavenly 'bodies', but felt, as Presences, moving and purposeful; and above them, the still, countless, mysterious lights, the stars; where God, the Lord of their hosts, is felt to reside.

There is the weird vision of Ezechiel, seen in fire and light and thunder, of the four beings, or *cherubim*, under God; a picture perhaps of the world itself under God, with the four beings as the four corners, the 'poles' or 'ends' of the earth; each four-faced, to show God's wisdom, power, strength and vigour, in the man, lion, ox and eagle heads; four-winged, with two wings touching the wings of the ones beside it, as each direction 'reaches' to the next (their wings 'joined'), yet is distinct from them (two 'covered their bodies'). But directions extend indefinitely (they all 'go straight forward') and turn (each is 'on a wheel') in every way (on 'wheels in wheels . . .') that we can see ('. . . full of eyes'). The Prophet, in fact, sees the whole world in the live creatures; 'on top of the temple': as the world turns on the temple, for him. But there is more than that: over the creatures a vault, 'terrible to look at'; on the vault an invisible ('sapphire') throne; on the throne 'something like a man', too intensely visible ('on fire') to be really seen, with all colours ('like a rainbow') streaming from him.

The Prophet is making us see God, above our world. In their very different ways, all these prophets are giving us one vision; long, complicated, often apparently contradictory, but a single vision. We can describe it as the Reign of God, over all; which means for them now, that their troubles are inflicted by God himself; and that, if so, a Suffering Servant is what the Jew must be, the Jew who is wholly faithful; the remnant, at least, who must suffer this anger of God faithfully, with a faith that is rewarded, that will save. They speak of the Leader, the Anointed (*Messias*) who would save; but as all hope in men, in actual rescuers, recedes, the conviction grows that it must be God himself, in some way, who will come and save. This is where we Christians, in our belief, part company with the Jews, and with everyone else in the world. He came.

The story of Jesus Christ, his teaching and death, is the 'New Testament', foreshadowed and prefigured by the Old; the new

dealing with God. We have his life recorded there; we can follow him, for page after page. His life has become the world's best-known story; but its tragedy continues still, in that it seems ineffective to so many people today; clouded, in their eyes, by sheer fairy-tale. There is tragedy for us, too, perhaps, in not realizing how strange and far-away its atmosphere of angels and miracles is, and is meant to be; by its very familiarity also, it can lose its effect. The atmosphere is there; if we try to clear it away, as a web of fantasy, from the 'real' Jesus, we leave an Ideal Man with noble sentiments to impart; not the Jesus that lives in our minds in this atmosphere, and needs this atmosphere to live.

There are famous paintings by Fra Angelico depicting scenes in the Gospels, especially the cross; and at the foot, either embracing or grasping it in an access of grief, the figure of St Dominic. Now it would be foolish to object that St Dominic lived a thousand years later and could not possibly have been present at the scene; but still more foolish to counter with a theory of the miraculous translation of St Dominic to the time and place of the passion. The whole idea of the painter is to make St Dominic see our Lord suffering as if suffering before him; and our Lord, while suffering, see St Dominic watching him; St Dominic is *imagined* there. We shall be shocked at this only if we view imagination as something slight, unreal irresponsible. Imagination is behind all thinking and seeing, the necessary accompaniment of all thought and volition; for by it, we put the world together out of the sounds and colours that we hear and see; because we do not hear or see things: we picture things. In the Gospels we are being made to picture the God Man.

But this is not to say that things were not happening; they were, obvious and outstanding, as we are told quite clearly and simply; miracles of healing, restoring to life, providing food and wine. Although we are naturally unwilling to believe stories of unusual and uncanny events, instinctively preferring our familiar, if humdrum, securities, nevertheless we must not let that feeling make us disbelieve stories that are true. The inconsequential detail of reality ('Now there were six waterpots of stone . . .'), the spontaneous reaction of onlookers ('And the steward said to the bridegroom . . .') is always there to convince us. And there remains the supreme and final wonder, forming the apex and point of each Gospel story: his death, and his rising from death.

The bleeding and suffocating man nailed to a Roman scaffold was admitting another mind and purpose, allowing and facing another judgment of good and ill, to the end; confronting the ritual disobedience of Man with ritual obedience; offering himself, as the spectacle, of how God can deal with Man, and Man with God. After offering the bread and wine of the Passing meal as a memorial of the body and blood to be offered; falling in prayer, in the garden vigil, before the reality overtaking him; intoning, as he hung, fragments of the Psalms, the most moving human complaints to God expressive of the completest and most painful submission to him; he was able at the end to say, from them—

In your hands, Lord, I entrust my life
and, in another account—

It is done!

As the knees sagged and the head fell forward on his chest, the story ends: God's judgment is accepted, allowed and borne by this man; who, in taking and endorsing it, supporting, and *willing* it, gave God and Man a single victory over all ill.

For, with the hasty burial, a loving attempt after the Sabbath to finish the rites properly, led to the discovery: that he had risen. There were strange encounters with him, when they were not only unable to believe their eyes, but were at first, we are candidly told, unprepared and unable to see him. They were given last reassurances of his complete power, and the forgiveness that they could grant; and then saw the rising into the sky; where he is felt, until he comes again, hanging over us all.

The New Testament concludes with the Deeds of the apostles, the Spirit poured out on them to convert the world to a realization of what had happened; the Epistles, or letters, to the Churches, telling us again and again what the new faith and hope is; what the Church is, the body we share; telling of our freedom from Law, in subjection to Christ and to faith in him; in ways quite impossible to summarize or describe. There is, finally, the fantasia of Revelation, *Apocalypse*; a letter to seven Churches, or to all Churches, with the picture of the four creatures, the world; showing the Lamb opening the seven seals, or all secrets, which were seven armed men, or all plagues besetting mankind; the seventh secret being itself seven angels with trumpets, sounding the end of the world: a nightmare of dragons and monsters

and collapsing cities, which the suffering Lamb alone can overcome, with those who follow him.

We are back at the beginning; except that the world is being plagued, not Egypt; the Lamb is killed and eaten up for the journey, and yet not killed, but in triumph; the people are waiting, to be led to the promised land; yet they need only wait, for the promised land comes to them. To the travellers there forms the mirage, the New Jerusalem in the sky; not illusion, but pale reflection, of unseen reality. We are at the very beginning: the gates are opening, showing the way to the enclosure of Pleasure within, the water and the tree of Life. The snake of our knowledge is crushed; in the middle of the picture is enthroned the Lamb we sacrifice, promising to come and bring us there:

See, I come quickly!

And my reward to every man for his deeds . . .

Indeed, I come quickly!

Come, Lord Jesus!

* * *

It is all very well, however, to look at the Bible in this way; but we must do more than glance at it, we must know it; and to know it we must read it, and make a practice of reading it. Regular readings in some form are quite necessary, we can see; which is one of the reasons for being obliged to attendance at Mass; the public part of it, like the daily Office of Religious, is simply a mosaic of Bible texts. Only in such public, 'periodic' presentation do the words rise to full significance and power. There is, also, in religious communities the additional practice of having a chapter a day read, at meals; and those fortunate enough to live in any community, of family, or work, or school, might arrange to read the Bible like this; choosing parts, at first. After the inevitable embarrassment, it could be a surprising success, and provide much-needed food for thought and argument. For single souls this will not be possible; but they might well learn from actors and actresses, who find it much easier to learn their long parts by reading them just before they go to sleep. Perhaps a few chapters in bed will help teach us our 'parts' in this more important drama.

That is the whole point; for the Bible, we are told, is an 'inspired' book; that is, a 'spirited' book: because what happens,

what is in this book, is 'spirited' out of the world, the world we know, or think we know; but 'spirited', too, because full of a spirit that will catch, and fill our lives. It is a life-time's interest really, a life; not another book, but *the* book; not just words, but *the* word, the first and last word; and the word, not about anything, or even everything, but about more than everything. It is the word of God.



THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE: II

St Luke's Witness to the Primitive Church

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

THE claim of the sixteenth-century Reformers to return to the teaching of the primitive Church by the aid of the written Scriptures is still heard today, but not so often as formerly, because the spirit of liberal criticism has completely undermined that reverent confidence in the Word of God which was once so strong in the children of the Reformation. As *The Times* (London)¹ confessed not long ago, 'to the majority of Englishmen the open Bible is now a closed book. . . . The popular mind at present takes for granted that the Bible has been fatally discredited and that "nobody now believes that kind of thing". The Reformers have handed the Church (the writer means the non-Catholic churches, of course) today a problem which they could not have foreseen. Rejecting both the papal usurpation and the late-medieval abuses and corruptions, they sought to recover a "pure" Christianity. That meant for them a Scriptural Christianity. From that position there can be no retreat. On that the reformed Churches take their stand. One can hardly exaggerate the emphasis in the Anglican Prayer Book on Scripture as the final court of appeal. But who is to interpret the Scriptures and what is their title to authority?'

The writer then proceeds to make an admission on his own behalf which reduces him to the situation of those who no longer read the Bible because they cannot trust it. 'The choice appeared

¹ 4 December, 1954, an article written by its religious correspondent.

to that generation to be one between two infallibilities; of the alternatives they chose the Bible. But in fact there is no infallible authority, in religion any more than anywhere else. The revelations of God to men in history can but come through fallible human agents.' So the hope of security of faith is an idle dream, for St Luke and much more for us today. All we can say of this is what has already been said with emphasis by the German liberal Protestant historian Harnack, whose study of the early Church led him to confess that, whatever sort of Church the Reformers established, it had no connection with the Church of the first and second centuries; and everyone who is familiar with the writings of the apostolic and post-apostolic age must come to the same conclusion. It is historically clear that for many years the Church lived and flourished on oral tradition without the aid of the written gospels, though not for so many years as was once firmly maintained by the opponents of Christian tradition. Gradually they have returned towards the traditional position until even an authority like Harnack has adopted a date for the gospels which hardly differs from our own. But it is also clear that even when the gospels were written and in circulation the preachers and apologists of the faith still preferred to appeal to what Papias in the first half of the second century called 'the living and abiding voice'. His words are preserved for us by Eusebius (265-339), who spent his whole life at the catechetical school of Caesarea in Palestine, gathering up the early traditions of the Church's teaching: 'For I considered', wrote Papias, 'that I should not get so much profit from what was written in books as from the voice which yet lives and remains'.²

Papias was born in the last quarter of the first century, became Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and was associated with John the Evangelist if not directly at least through the medium of his friend Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, who died a martyr in 155 when nearing his hundredth year, and who was certainly a disciple of John. Thus Papias was in an excellent position to appeal to the living and abiding voice. The same rule is laid down by Irenaeus (c. 130-200), Bishop of Lyons, who was born and grew up in the same quarter of the Church as Papias and Polycarp, who was a disciple of St Justin (martyred in 165), a man of Palestinian origin. Indeed, Irenaeus insists so strongly that the

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III, 29.

unwritten tradition of the Church is the determinative voice in matters of faith, that he holds the opinion that the faith could have been safeguarded by this means alone even had the Apostles committed nothing to writing; which presupposes his conviction of the existence of a living infallible voice. Origen (185-253), brought up in the catechetical school of Alexandria, later its head and then master of the catechetical school of Caesarea, though he laboured so assiduously at the Scriptures nevertheless is equally insistent on the necessity of appeal to the living tradition in order to obtain security of faith. 'Whereas there are many who think they have the mind of Christ, and some hold views different from those of former times, let the Church's teaching be maintained which has been handed down in one succession from the Apostles and abides till the present day in the churches.'³ Tertullian (c. 160-250) bears the same witness for the great church of North Africa, expressed in his usual vigorous style. 'To know what the Apostles taught, that is what Christ revealed to them, recourse must be had to the churches which they founded and instructed by word of mouth and their letters.'⁴ . . . Of the things practised (in the administration of baptism) and of other usages, if you ask for the written authority of Scripture none will be found. They spring from tradition which practice has confirmed and obedience ratified.'⁵ . . . For nothing is gained from gathering together texts of Scripture but indigestion and headache. . . . You will only lose your voice in arguing, and all you gain will be anger against blasphemy. . . . Get things in their right order and put at the head that which is the only question at issue: Whose is the faith? Whose are the Scriptures? By whom, and through whom, and when, and to whom was delivered that teaching by which men are made Christians? You will find the truth of the Scriptures and of their meaning and of all Christian tradition there where you find the truth of Christian teaching and faith.'⁶ I need not run the risk of wearying the reader by adding the testimony of Cyprian, Eusebius, Basil, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and many others of the early Fathers, because they all follow the rule laid down by St Luke, the rule that is still followed by the authentic successors of the Apostles when they are called upon solemnly to pronounce for the guidance of the faithful what

³ *De Princ.* prol. ii.

⁵ *De Corona Militis*, c.3, 4.

⁴ *De Praescriptionibus adversus Haereses*, 21.

⁶ *De Praescriptionibus*, 17 and 19.

things are necessarily to be believed and to be done (faith and morals) in order to be secure in the faith of Jesus Christ.

But it needs no great penetration of mind to perceive that, no matter how strictly we adhere to the living and abiding voice of ecclesiastical tradition, it follows that neither we, nor the Fathers of the Church, nor St Luke himself could have any solid grounds for security of faith if we were in the position of the unfortunate writer in *The Times*. On his hypothesis tradition is no safer as a guide than Scripture; less so, in fact. If 'the revelations of God to man in history can but come through fallible human agents', then no security or certainty is possible; we are left with probabilities and mere opinions. That is the way to doubt and infidelity, for opinion means mental adhesion to one position with the fear that the opposite may be true. But what man can be content with opinion and probability where so much lies at stake? Certainly not St Paul with his confident boast: 'I know whom I have believed and I am certain'.⁷ Therefore he goes on to exhort Timothy to a like confidence: 'Hold the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and in love that is Christ Jesus. Keep that good deposit by the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.'

For Luke, the companion and disciple of St Paul, that is the key to his view of the primitive Church, and it is demonstrated on every page of Acts which has been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. Fifty times he introduces the Spirit of God (once called the Spirit of Jesus) showing how the Church was born, taught, guided, and propagated under the influence of the Spirit. Nothing is further from Luke's mind than the idea that God's revelation to men is subject to the fallibilities of mere human agents. Time after time he repeats that the men to whom the faith was delivered were 'filled with the Holy Ghost' in order that they might faithfully deliver it to the world. They spoke 'as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak'. They are the divinely appointed channels through which the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon others, morally by prayer and preaching (viii, 15), physically by actual contact through the laying on of hands (viii, 17). It is the Holy Ghost who directs operations, filling up the gap in the number of the Apostles (i, 16-24), indicating the time and the persons for the work of spreading the Gospel to the Gentile world (xiii, 2-4),

⁷ 2 Tim. i, 12.

appointing bishops (xx, 28), guiding here, forbidding there, always in control. Moreover Luke declares that the Apostles, these divinely chosen agents through whom it pleases the Holy Ghost to operate, are fully conscious of the fact that there is a community of action between themselves and the Spirit of God whenever they are acting formally as his agents. See the astounding assertion made before the Sanhedrin when the Apostles made a declaration of their faith in Christ: 'We and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all that obey him, are the witnesses of these things' (v, 32). Again, when Ananias deceives the Apostles about the price of his land, Peter accuses him of trying to deceive the Holy Ghost (v, 3). But all this fades into comparative insignificance before the claim made by the Apostles and ancients of the Church at Jerusalem in their letter to the Gentile converts: 'It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us' (xv, 28). If there is no authority for that claim then it is the height of blasphemy. But Luke does not fail to provide us with the authority for that claim in the express teaching of Christ contained in the third Gospel. The Spirit of God that filled John the Baptist, Elisabeth, and Zachary (I, i, 15, 41, 67), by whose power Mary conceived the Son of God (i, 35), that descended upon Jesus at his baptism (iii, 22), led him into the desert of temptation (iv, 1), brought him thence into Galilee to begin his ministry (iv, 14), anointed him to preach the gospel (iv, 18; cf. Peter's memory of this in Acts x, 38, also iv, 27), this is the same Spirit promised to the Apostles that they might be faithful witnesses to the teaching of Christ (xxiv, 49).

In the mind of Luke, then, the Church is the sphere of the Holy Spirit's activity and the Acts of the Apostles describes that activity. In no other book of the New Testament, not excluding the Epistles of St Paul, is the Holy Ghost so much brought to the forefront. In a word, according to Acts, the Spirit of God is the source of the whole life of the Church, and therefore meriting the title 'soul of the Church'; for soul is defined as the animating principle in things that live. And since the life of the Church is a spiritual life, and the two essential powers of a spirit are intelligence and will, so the animating spirit of the Church is the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Charity. But it is by no means Luke's intention to teach that every action of every disciple was inspired by the Holy Ghost received at baptism. Ananias and

Sapphira were presumably of the number of the first Christians; and Luke recalls in the words of Stephen that some resist the Holy Ghost (vii, 51). Nor does he give any ground for the opinion that every Christian comes under the influence of the Holy Ghost to the same degree and for the same purpose, so that, as some have supposed, the whole body of the faithful is the inspired and infallible source of Christian truth. Luke is too good a disciple of St Paul to think any such thing, and what the Apostle taught on this point is put with crystal clearness to his Corinthian converts in his doctrine of the mystical body of Christ. The one and same Spirit which animates that body manifests itself by diverse graces and diverse ministries, as the human soul manifests itself by different bodily activities. So through the instrumentality of some members of the mystical body the Spirit accomplishes the work of the apostolate, through others prophecy, through others teaching. Not all are apostles, not all are prophets or teachers, not all have the grace of interpretation. 'But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will' (I Cor. xii, 4-30).

What other conclusion can we draw but this: that those who take their stand upon the Scriptures and those who appeal to the primitive Church ought to realize what this claim involves, and St Luke leaves us in no doubt upon that point. It is evident what he means by the Church: a divine institution, guided and taught by the Spirit of God, so firmly established and divinely guided that, in spite of human frailty and diabolical hostility, it will continue infallibly to be the 'support and firm foundation of truth' (I Tim. iii, 15) unto the end of the world. For Luke's is the gospel of universal salvation; he had heard his master Paul preach that 'God willeth all men to be saved'. But surely we cannot allow ourselves to think, or to attribute such an illogical conclusion to the logical-minded Luke, that all this marvellous activity of the Spirit of God ceased with the death of the Apostles. Indeed—and both the religious divisions of today as well as the anxious searching for unity witness to this—the further we get from the time of the Apostles the more urgent a need is there for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the preservation and exposition of the faith. Let us remind ourselves once more that the object of faith is supernatural truth, the Blessed Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the destiny of man, the necessity and number of the

Sacraments as means of the grace required for the attainment of that destiny, and the rest. If these truths and the content of them 'can but come to us through fallible human agents', then there is no alternative to resigning ourselves to endless and ever-increasing division, with the inevitable consequence that Christianity will be progressively emptied of its supernatural content. Human reason and argument alone are powerless to define and determine supernatural truth. But at any rate human reason ought to carry us thus far: it would be unreasonable to accept the doctrine of the Incarnation in its fullness and its consequences, and at the same time suppose that God had not provided the means by which mankind could possess that security of faith which St Luke seeks to convey to his beloved Theophilus. That means is 'the living and abiding voice' by which the Holy Ghost speaks to the world through the Incarnate Son of God, through his Apostles, and through their true successors, as infallible today as in the beginning of the Church.

(Concluded)



FROM SYNAGOGUE TO EARLY CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY: II

J. GUILLET, S.J.

The Scriptures in the Life of the Synagogue

THE primary object of the meetings in the Synagogue was the reading of the Scriptures, yet this was quite a recent innovation, seemingly introduced along with the new institution. In order to realize this better, we must go back to the time of the Temple.

In the old days, when Israel had been gathered together in her own land, leading a national life that centred round the Temple in Jerusalem and the big annual festivals held there, the whole People used to go up to the Temple to offer sacrifice. The indissoluble bond between the Temple and the sacrifices made there was indeed one of the basic requirements of the Old Testament religion.

The Scriptures had a large place in this liturgy both before

the Exile and after it, when the Temple was restored and the sacrifices and ceremonies were revived. A number of the books—Leviticus, for example—consist of codes of law, and particularly rituals, intended to fix the liturgy to be used in the Temple. The Psalms were largely a collection of hymns to be sung on liturgical occasions, especially as an accompaniment to festivals and sacrifices. Some of the historical books originated in these festivals and gatherings of the whole People: it is quite likely, though not certain, that the first fifteen chapters of Exodus, from the hardening of Pharaoh's heart to the Israelite's departure from Egypt and the Canticle of Moses, centre round stories evolved and developed in connection with the Paschal festival. These stories were told at the Jewish Pasch, they may even have been acted, and they concluded with the Canticle of Moses. It is also very likely that chapters 19 to 24 of Exodus, containing the great scenes on Sinai, were said on certain festival occasions whose object was the renewal of the Covenant. For instance, after the Exile Esdras read the Law to the People assembled in Jerusalem on a holy Day.

The preaching of the Prophets too had the Temple as its principal setting. Amos was an exception: he did not preach in the Temple, but at the schismatic procession in Bethel, which he seems to have followed to remind the people of the demands made by the God of Israel. But Isaias and Jeremias certainly lived in the Temple and Jeremias preached there—which means that the People must have been gathered within the holy precincts.

All this goes to show how the Jewish Scriptures took shape around the liturgy that accompanied the festivals and sacrifices, and how they were intended to give an inner significance to functions that might otherwise have been no more than external actions. Any liturgy or external worship runs the risk of degenerating into rites which are empty of meaning.

Yet so long as Israel was gathered together in one body, leading its national life without any hitch and remaining faithful to its traditions and customs, it does not seem to have been necessary to write down any of the things that were recited and sung. For the fundamental element in this liturgy was the sacrifice. This is a mysterious, universal and very profound feature of most religions: the object of worship, the encounter with God is brought about by sacrifice. In the act of sacrifice, man consecrates

all he is and all the results of his activity and culture to his Creator. The sacrifice consecrates his offering and ensures his communion with God.

The Liturgy of the Book

But in post-Exilic Judaism Israel could no longer offer up sacrifices for they were only possible in Jerusalem. The novelty—and an extraordinary novelty it was—was that a worship was in fact still being celebrated, and with rites whose object was not a sacrifice but the reading of the Word of God. For the Liturgy of the Synagogue now became entirely centred on the Scriptures. In point of fact the Word of God had always been regarded as something divine: the prophets had been convinced of that. Now, dispersed throughout the world, the Israelites had to live their own traditions and affirm their belonging together and their unity, and they found themselves compelled to write their Scriptures down. I will not say that this had not begun before the destruction of the Temple, but it does seem that it was the dispersion, and the founding of the Synagogue, that made it necessary to fix Israel's traditions in writing—the psalms as well as the laws—and thus create the Canon. The Jews were convinced that the Scriptures were something God had given them, and so it was possible to use them as a proper form of worship. From now on worship in the Synagogue had a rite and liturgy of its own: the liturgy of the Covenant.

The Covenant continues

All Israel's liturgies were, of course, liturgies of the Covenant, since the Covenant was the basis of Israel's religion. It was not only a bilateral contract of 'give and take', God granting his blessing to the people if they remained faithful to the Law. The Covenant meant more than that: it meant a joint life lived together by God and his People. Previously such a Covenant had only been able to be lived in the Land of God, where the Lord received his People, for this land had been given to them so that the People of God could live there as a holy People.

When the worship of the Synagogue took the place of the Temple, this alliance, this Covenant, which had formerly been sealed by sacrifices, was now sealed by the worship itself. The People of Israel still received the Word of God, the pledge of God and the Law of God, but in return they now gave their Faith.

Their worship became more inward and to a certain extent more spiritual. Israel gradually came to realize that animal victims could be of no avail without an interior offering and a real consecration of human life.

The Part played by the Scribes

Thus the Synagogue was in fact the origin of the written Bible, which became the Sacred Book of the liturgy. From this point dates the great tradition of the copyists and scribes of Israel, a tradition so perfect that the Hebrew Bible has in fact been handed down to us much more faithfully than were the Books of the New Testament—a fact proved recently by the discoveries made in the Qumran caves. The Scriptures were regarded as things absolutely sacred. From this time dates the movement which tended to turn the religion of Israel into a religion of THE BOOK (a tendency which became a real aberration in the Islamic religion, where the Book itself became a divine object). Hence the importance of learning, which has been so great in all subsequent Judaism. The Synagogue was not only a place of worship, but also a school-house and a place of study. Here lay the source of Jewish culture and education throughout the centuries; and it explains why the Jews were able to keep their unity and their Scriptures. 'Israel will have nothing to fear from her enemies', one Rabbi said, 'as long as children's voices can be heard repeating the words of the Law in the Synagogues.'

He who fulfilled the Scriptures

The fact that the Synagogue gave Israel the Scriptures may have been providential for Christianity. For Jesus certainly presented himself as the One who came to fulfil the Scriptures. And this did not simply mean that he was able to give the answer to enigmas or riddles posed by Holy Writ, or to fulfil such and such a mysterious prophecy whose sense till then had been obscure. There is of course this element in the fulfilment of the Scriptures. But there is also something much greater and more wonderful; for what was meant was that Jesus manifested in his own Person, in his movements, his words, his life and death, everything towards which the People of Israel had till then been tending. It meant that he was to show why God had chosen Israel, why he had given her the Law and inspired her with a certain expectation.

The fulfilment of the Scriptures meant first of all, literally, that Jesus was the One who observed the Scriptures and kept the Law to perfection. It meant that it was Jesus whom the prophets had called for, when they had preached righteousness, for he alone achieved the righteousness they required. He alone was faithful to their teaching. He realized what no other Israelite had been able to realize: an utter faithfulness to the Scriptures and the perfect fulfilment of them.

It seems to me providential that Jesus should have revealed the meaning of the Scriptures at a time when they were taking the shape of a Book and forming a Canon. In a sense it may be said that the portrait of Jesus was taking shape and being traced in the Holy Book just when its original was being revealed in the living Face of Our Lord. Thus Israel was able to do all that God required of her in the Scriptures and at the same time to discover in Jesus Christ One who gave God his full due. It seems therefore quite natural that Jesus should have appeared in the Synagogue—where the Scriptures were read and re-read—as the One who came to fulfil them.

The Septuagint

There are a few minor points contained within this great providential fact which are worth emphasizing. The Synagogue, for instance, was responsible for the Greek text of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, so called because it was done by seventy translators locked up in separate rooms, who, tradition says, were found in the end to have produced exactly the same text. This is certainly a legend, but it has an underlying truth behind it, namely the fact that the translation bears the mark of the hand of God. Whether it was inspired or not is a disputed question. Some excellent theologians and a number of Church Fathers have asserted that after all the translation of the Septuagint may have been just as inspired as the Hebrew original was. However that may be, the translation itself was made necessary by the existence of the Synagogue which had to provide an intelligible text for communities scattered in countries where Hebrew was not understood. And, important for us, it supplied the first missionaries with a vocabulary which enabled them to address the pagan world directly, and thus win it to Christ.

It is difficult for us to gauge the importance of a translation in

the matter of evangelizing pagans. A missionary can understand the seriousness of the problem. When he lands in a new world he wonders what words he is going to use to convey the fundamental realities he has brought with him, how he is going to translate into the pagan language certain words which have no equivalent outside the Christian world, words like 'God', 'Sacrifice', 'Penance', 'the Spirit'. This is a very difficult task and it means that the missionary has to be fully acquainted with the civilization he is entering.

There is an example of these risks and dangers in the life of St Francis Xavier, who, when he first began to preach, was given a word for 'God' by a Japanese. He used it, only to discover later that it signified a dreadful and terrifying divinity, more demon than god, and that he had in fact been teaching his hearers to worship the devil.

Not all the early Christian missionaries were so well up in Greek civilization that they could speak to the people they approached in an intelligible religious language, and the Greek version of the Old Testament was therefore a first-rate instrument for establishing and spreading Christianity. And this was due to the deep and thoughtful work done two centuries earlier by the translators in Alexandria, who knew very well what they were about.

There is one very striking example of this. In translating the first commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God', a less thoughtful translator would naturally have rendered 'love' by the usual word *eran*, which sounds equivocal even to our ears, and we have been Christian for centuries. If this had been done, the Greek world would never have grasped what it really meant to 'love God'. Fortunately the Jewish translators in Alexandria deliberately chose the verb *agapan*, a word less frequently used but one which enabled the Greeks to understand what the love of God and men really meant in Revelation and in the Bible.

The establishment of the Scriptures and the Greek translation for use in the Synagogues seems to have been providential. Pagan converts to Christianity were brought into contact with both the Jewish scriptural tradition of the true God and him who had come to fulfil the Scriptures. The importance of this double discovery becomes plain when we find St Luke, a writer from the pagan world, faithfully adopting the Jewish Scriptures along with

the Christian faith: the stories of our Lord's childhood, especially in the first two chapters of his Gospel, are closely interwoven with passages from the Old Testament. This is not surprising in the case of St Matthew, who was a Jew, but St Luke had been a pagan, and it shows that when he became converted to Christ he knew that he had to become converted to Israel too, and to the Bible which Israel gave him.

More sacred than the Scriptures

In the first part of this paper we remarked upon the essential difference between the unity of the Church and the unity of the Synagogue. Here is another remarkable difference. Although the Church accepted the Word of God in the Scriptures as something sacred, she had something more sacred than a written Book, and that was the Eucharist. The Scriptures are made perpetual and eternally living in the Eucharistic Presence, and this fact appeared historically from the very first day. The Jewish Christians continued to attend the meetings in the Synagogue along with the other Jews, and for a long time they found no difficulty in this. However, they realized that they had something else besides the Scriptures, and they began to meet in their own homes to celebrate the Eucharist. Today these two meetings, the one in the Synagogue and the Eucharistic meeting, which used to be separate, are joined together: first we celebrate the reading service inherited from the Synagogue, then the Eucharistic service which forms the Mass proper. We saw earlier that the destruction of the Temple deprived Israel of the encounter with God that took place in the Sacrifice. This the Christian Church rediscovered, and with the Eucharist she reintroduced the Sacrifice of Christ into the worship of the Book. The Synagogue had sprung from the destruction of the Temple, as a providential but imperfect alternative to it, but it could not claim to take the place of the Temple; whereas the sacrifice of Christ contains and sums up the whole of the Temple liturgy.

Memorial and Expectation

Worship in the Synagogue, however, centred entirely around a tradition—the past, surviving in the holy Book—and an expectation. The Eucharist has both these features: it is a memorial of the past, but a memorial which really becomes present on the

altar; it has a past history, yet is perpetually present; and it is also an expectation, but what we, Christians, look forward to is ours already. This is possible because the Word became Flesh and the Word brings the Spirit. The Word of God is not fossilized in a book, it goes deeper than the written words: in the Sacrament it is a Life, the Life of Jesus, the Word of the Father. And in fact it is more than that, for in Jesus all was Life, his actions, his movements, even his times of silence. There are certain things that the Scriptures are unable to tell us: the Person of Jesus is absolutely necessary to convey the Mystery of God to us and to give us access to what God is: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This Person is given to us in the Scriptures, but he is given to us in a better way in the Eucharist. Thus the Sacrament, the Food of Christians, deeply modified the Synagogue as an institution.

The Christian Tradition

The Synagogue was based on a book and a verbal tradition: one man said something to another, and he in his turn said it to a third. The Christian tradition is not a verbal tradition. It still has the Scriptures as its nucleus and centre, and it never gets estranged from them, but it overlaps and completes them. Being broader and more extensive, it is bound to be more faithful to Jesus Christ as a living Person. This fidelity to the Spirit of the Christian tradition finds tangible proof in a fact to which I referred above when speaking of the Jewish copyists and scribes: the New Testament writings were not transcribed as carefully and faithfully as the Jewish Scriptures which had been copied in the Synagogues. This is not difficult to understand.

In the Jewish world, the Bible, precisely because it was a holy thing, was never taken out of the Synagogue, so that the number of copies remained comparatively small. The Christians, on the other hand, who were on the whole less well educated than the Jews, all wanted to have the Scriptures at home. There was a great demand for copies of the Gospels and St Paul's Epistles. As these had to be produced for a wide public and the Christians had no specialized copyists the work was not done as carefully and faithfully as in the Synagogue. The Christian copyists sometimes took liberties with the text. While reading or copying one Gospel they would suddenly remember another, and they had no scruples whatsoever about changing a word here and there and sub-

stituting another which they thought better. Technically, this is a serious loss, yet nothing was lost to the Faith. The miracle—if one may so call it—was that in spite of these occasional liberties the Gospel remained absolutely unaffected: the worst Christian manuscripts—and some are very bad indeed—do not contain a single error. The Christian tradition was not affected because it had a living tradition to support it.

'What hast thou that thou hast not received?'

In conclusion, let us remember one last thing we owe to the institution of the Synagogue: it forces us to be continually remembering our origins. One of the great temptations for the members of any chosen group is to believe that they have deserved their election. Both Christians and Jews are prone to imagine that their privileges—Baptism in one case, Choice in the other—have been granted them because of their exceptional merits. It was Israel's temptation to believe that she had deserved her election, and it is a temptation facing the Christian today to believe that he has deserved his vocation.

The Bible reminds the People of God unceasingly that left to themselves they are nothing, that the Lord has made them what they are. They would have been reduced to nothing in Egypt had not God taken them out of that land of paganism and oppression. When the author of Deuteronomy describes the ideal life for Israel, he insists on the helplessness of the people and the free gifts they have received from God in 'a land flowing with milk and honey'.¹ The Jews were a peasant people and like all peasants attached to their own soil, yet the Holy Book did its best to root them even more firmly, reminding them that they had not been born in the land but brought there, finding 'great and goodly cities which they had not built for themselves, houses full of riches which they had not set up for themselves . . . vineyards and oliveyards which they had not planted themselves',² a land where everything came from God and whose fertility was a result of the rain that fell from heaven, which man himself could not provide. And in this 'land of God' they had to 'do all his precepts before the Lord', so that they might enjoy the gifts of God.

The Prophets insist on this teaching too, and we, Christians,

¹ Deut. vi, 3.

² Deut. vi, 10, 11.

should apply it to ourselves. As a help in this, the Church always finds herself facing a religion and a People which compel her to remember her origins. Everywhere she finds the Jewish People on the same path as herself, scattered as they are, competing with Christians and partly at least possessing the same riches as she herself does. This is a constant reminder that she does not hold these riches from herself but from the divine mercy.

Thus the Christian is continually being encouraged not only to be modest, which is only human, but to be humble, in the sense of acknowledging that he owes everything to God, and through the ministry and instrumentality of other men. The Church has received her inheritance from a People who suffered to preserve it and hand it on. This seems to me to be one of the chief services the Synagogue still renders the Church to this day, and we Christians should never stop thanking God for it.

(Concluded)



THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

P. J. O'MAHONY

THE Fourth Gospel has variously been called the 'Gospel of Grace', 'of Love', 'of the Divinity of Christ', and all these may be applied to it with equal aptness. Perhaps the most striking title is that of 'Grace'. It is the Gospel of hope in our future glory and of our present bliss. We are presented in it with a divinely optimistic view of life because it brings the message of God's infinite and eternal love for mankind. One cannot read it, it seems, and not deepen one's love of God. All this arises from its central theme, which is Restoration. It brings to sinful man new hope of salvation.

If one were asked to produce a text in support of the doctrine of original sin, as a preamble to the doctrine of grace, one could only offer the whole Gospel, for, although original sin is nowhere specifically mentioned, the notion of our estrangement from God is everywhere evident. It is from this estrangement that Christ came to save us.

The Gospel pictures for us the world in a state of utter darkness; in need of light which is the power to believe, for mankind

has not believed. 'Men of the world have never believed in their whole life . . . and in consequence they think an absolute, unhesitating faith in anything unseen to be simply extravagance.'¹ The light which is given them will enable them to believe. If they prefer light to darkness, *life* is given them. They leave the womb of night and come into the light of day—to *life*. But even when this new life has been obtained, all does not end there, for remnants of their former blindness remain and will always remain while they are in the world. They must inhere in the source of life if they are to continue alive. Furthermore, just as they cannot leave the darkness of their own accord, so neither can they persevere in this life unaided; in fact, without this inherence they fall back into the darkness of death.

Such, then, in brief is the teaching of St John on the subject of grace. But we can pursue the matter further, considering certain texts which show, beyond all doubt, St John's clear setting-out of this sublime doctrine.

Christ, who is to give us this new life, is of course the source of it—he is God.

'I and the Father are one' (x, 30).

'By him all things were made' (i, 3).

'For as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself' (v, 26).

We are spiritually dead, so that if this life is to be given to us we must be born again; this time in a spiritual manner.

'Unless a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God' (iii, 3).

We must be born again of 'water and the Holy Ghost' (iii, 5).

But there are *two* necessary prerequisites; the first is *faith*, the second is the necessity of being *called by the Father*. In each case the Gospel is equally insistent. We cannot come to life, to *spiritual life*, by purely natural means.

'Therefore did I tell you that no man can come to me unless it be given him by my Father' (vi, 66).

'I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and to me thou gavest them; and they have kept thy word' (xvii, 6).

'Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me' (xvii, 11).

¹ Newman: *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, 4.

By this call there is aroused in us the desire for God. Before it, we were turned away from him just as a man with his back to the sun is turned away from the source of natural light and life. The sun is the occasion of his seeing natural phenomena. He could not conceive the idea of having the sun of which he has never heard, nor the idea of seeing things which naturally he is unable to see. The sun and natural objects precede man. They must be there before he can desire them. No man can dispose himself for supernatural life, in virtue of the fact that such an act rests in a sphere totally above his natural state. One act, that of the natural man, is in the natural order; the other is in the supernatural order. Yet man must be disposed. Just as matter must be disposed to receive a new form, so must the soul of man be disposed to receive the gift which excels its present state. God must dispose or call him. He is the only sufficient cause. The result of this call is the gift of Faith.

‘They, therefore, said unto him: “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” Jesus, answering, said unto them: “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent” ’ (vi, 28-29).

‘For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish but may have life everlasting’ (iii, 16).

Thus we see that Faith in God is a *sine qua non* condition. These texts might seem to imply that Faith alone is sufficient. It is merely a gateway to the fulness which follows on the gift of Faith. Hence, those ‘who sit in the shadow of death’ must receive Light before they can see. This light of Faith is the gift of God. It is possible to resist the Divine calling. The Jews did so and our Lord often upbraids them for it. God calls us but does not force us, because fallen man has still the use of intellect and free will. When the call is given, man is expected to co-operate. He must make full use of the ‘arousing’ grace which is implied in the call. If he responds he is helped still further. All have been called, for Christ ‘enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world’ (i, 9). Sufficient grace is given, but this can only become effective through man’s co-operation. By co-operation he receives ‘grace for grace’ (i, 16). Consequently, we find our Lord warning his hearers of the dangers inherent in free will:

‘Therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins. For

if you believe not that I am he you shall die in your sins' (viii, 24).

St Prosper tells us that in the gift of Faith, in itself a grace, there is nothing that constrains or compels the will, although the effect of grace is to move the will to incline to God. No, the effect with regard to free will is to lead the will to desire to be subjected to such a sweet yoke.

Perhaps we should next consider the effects of this restoration to our former state. The first effect is union with God, even to the extent as we shall see, of becoming one with him. We become the 'Sons of God'.

'But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the Sons of God, to them that believe in his name' (i, 2).

'And the glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one as we also are one' (xvii, 22).

'I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one' (xvii, 23).

This brings us to the in-dwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul. For where there is one Divine Person there also are the others found.

'... and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him' (xiv, 23).

'And I shall ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete that he may abide with you for ever' (xiv, 16).

The intimacy which exists between a soul in the state of grace and God exceeds the human imagination. This was the New Revelation. God is our Father—no longer is he represented as the stern exactor of justice as in the Old Testament. He loves us to the extent of coming to abide with us, if we will have him, for he respects man's free will even to this extent.

This union is altogether necessary if we are to live our lives as God would have us live them. Without grace, our participation is forfeited. And the most important thing to be remembered is that we cannot, of ourselves, remain in the love of God. Neither can we do anything that merits eternal reward without his aid.

'I am the vine, you the branches. He that abideth in me, the same beareth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing' (xv, 5).

Here again, as in many other texts, is emphasized man's spiritual inability. All comes from God's bounty.

As to the means whereby we are to abide in his love, we have only to turn to Chapter VI. It is not intended to discuss the chapter but merely to point out pertinent passages relating to the conservation of 'the work begun in us' (Phil. i, 6). It serves to illustrate how united with the Godhead we may become by availing ourselves of the means of holiness which Christ has given to us.

'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him' (vi, 57).

'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me the same also shall live by me' (vi, 58).

St Thomas tells us that 'wherever the body of Christ is, there of necessity must be the Godhead. For both are really united, wherever there is one the other must be' (*Summa Theol.* iii, 76. 1). In what conceivable manner could man become more like to God? We live—we feast on the Loving Victim. Just as the food we eat is assimilated and becomes part of our very bodies, so the Body of Christ becomes part of our souls, animating thereby our whole being with the Life of God. Yet this gives rise to another consideration, viz.: our life in Eternity with God.

'If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever' (vi, 52).

'He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life' (vi, 47).

Statements similar to this last text are recorded in St John's Gospel no fewer than six times. What did our Lord mean when he made these statements? Père Garrigou-Lagrange gives us the following answer:

'He that believes in me with a living faith, that is, with a faith that is united with charity, with the love of God and the love of his neighbour, possesses eternal life already begun.'²

This possession of Eternal Life is called the *inchoatio vite* by St Thomas. In other words, he who believes in Christ has within himself in germ, a supernatural life which is fundamentally the same as eternal life. Our spiritual progress cannot tend in the direction of eternal life unless it presupposes the seed of it already existing in us; seed of the same nature as the life towards which we are tending. This is equally true in the natural sphere where the seed, for example of an oak tree, is contained in a tiny acorn.

'And this is the will of my Father, that sent me, that everyone that seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life ever-

² *Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, p. 13.

lasting and I will raise him up on the last day' (vi, 40). What, then, is the fruit of the seed of grace? This brings us to the much-discussed matter of works. St John's Gospel is equally insistent on the necessity. Good works are emphasized as the direct result of the love of God which grace engenders in it. The whole of Chapter XIII is an implicit comment on what grace should cause in us. But there are other texts even more explicit:

'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another as I have loved you' (xiv, 15).

'If any man love me, he will keep my word' (xiv, 23).

Good works, then, are an essential part of the life of the just man. They are the outward expression of the inward contact which he has with God. Grace is the medium whereby we lead a supernatural life as distinct from the purely natural. By grace, then, we live in some sense the very life of God, since our good acts have an eternal consequence.

Thus we see the process which is involved in our becoming reconciled to God once more. God calls us to participate in the life of the Godhead. Just as Adam brought death to us, Christ brings life to us. We are born again. The gift of Grace is a free gift depending on the call of the Father. Co-operation on our side with this gift is essential, but even for this, grace is needed, for as we have seen, unless we abide in Christ and so in the Trinity we 'die' once more. Now a dead man cannot work; the same analogy applies in the supernatural life.

We see then, that the teaching on grace as found in the Fourth Gospel immediately precludes the contention of the Pelagians. Grace is absolutely necessary if we are to live as God wills us. It also denies the error of semi-Pelagianism; we cannot, of ourselves, prepare actively for grace. God gives us the initiating grace and future progressive grace. We cannot continue in the love of God without grace. In a word, our whole status is radically the gift of grace. Outwardly, a man in the state of grace remains *terrenum animal*, but inwardly he is indeed *coelo dignum*, a citizen of heaven. 'To purchase for us this inheritance, Christ, our Lord, poured out his precious Blood upon the Cross. May the thought of what we owe him teach us to love him better and to follow more closely in his footsteps.'³

³ G. H. Joyce: *The Doctrine of Grace*, p. 267.

A SERMON OF ST AUGUSTINE ON THE TITLE OF PSALM 33: II

Translated by EDMUND HILL, O.P.

So he changed his features before Abimelech, before the kingdom of his father, before the Jews. And he sent him away and off he went.

HE sent away this Jewish people and went off.¹ Look for Christ nowadays among the Jews, and you won't find him. What did he send them away for? Because he changed his features. You see, they *would* stick to the sacrifice after the fashion of Aaron, so they missed the sacrifice after the fashion of Melchisedech. They lost Christ, and the gentiles began to possess him, although he had not sent them any warning in advance. He had sent the Jews plenty of warning, through David himself, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through Isaías, Jeremias and the other prophets, and a few of them did recognize him as a result—few, that is, compared to the number that failed to and were lost. In fact we read that there were several thousands that believed—as it is written, 'A remnant shall be saved' (Rom. ix, 27). But look for circumcised Christians nowadays, and you won't find any. When the faith was in its infancy there were thousands of them. Look for them now and you won't find any. And that is as it should be, because he changed his features before Abimelech and he sent him away, and off he went. He also changed his features before Achis and sent him away and off he went. The reason the names are changed is to make us alive to the mysterious meaning of the event; it's as if he were saying to you: 'There is something locked up here. Knock, don't stick at the letter, because the letter kills; be eager for the spirit, because

¹ Augustine interprets the text: 'he changed his features . . . and he sent him away and off he went', as if the subject of all three verbs were David (representing Christ). He knew, of course, that in the story it was Achis who sent David away, and not vice versa. But the grammatical form of the sentence, three verbs in succession with the subject left to be understood, made it possible, and indeed more correct according to the rules of grammar rigidly applied, to construe the sentence in the way he did. If this seems to us to be a procedure arbitrary to the point of perversity, we must remember that for Augustine and his contemporaries the sacred text had the quality of an oracular utterance, and it is customary for oracles to speak in riddles, the solution of which calls for a highly artificial manipulation of the terms they are couched in.

the spirit gives life. A spiritual understanding is salvation for the believer.'

So just watch now, brothers, how he sent king Achis away. Achis I told you means 'how can it be'. Now remember the gospel. When our Lord Jesus Christ was talking about his body, he said: 'If anyone does not eat my flesh and drink my blood, he will not have life in him, because my flesh really is food, and my blood really is drink' (John vi, 54). And his disciples were shocked and horrified; they thought our Lord was saying something simply frightful, that they were to eat his flesh and drink his blood as they could see it there before them; and they could not stomach it, as much as to say: 'How can it be?' Error and ignorance and foolishness are personified in king Achis. Where people are saying 'How can it be' there is a lack of understanding; and where there is no understanding there is the darkness of ignorance. So they were under a reign of ignorance, the reign of king How-can-it-be. Our Lord then was saying: 'If anyone does not eat my flesh and drink my blood'. And because he had changed his features this sounded like raving lunacy, giving men his flesh and blood to eat and drink. So David was regarded as a madman, and Achis said: 'This is a raving lunatic you have brought me'. Doesn't it sound utter madness, Eat my flesh, drink my blood? Yes, but only to king Achis, to the fools and ignorant. That is why he sent them away and off he went. Understanding slipped out of their minds, so that they would not be able to grasp him. And what did *they* have to say about it? 'How can it be', almost in so many words. 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' (John vi, 53) they said. They thought our Lord was raving, quite off his head. But he knew what he was saying in changing his features like that; as though in a fit of lunacy he was proclaiming the sacraments, 'and affecting and drumming on the doors of the city'.

Now we must go on to find out what that means. It is not without reason that it says he fell forward at the doors of the gate and that spittle was dribbling down his beard. None of this is said just for fun. If stretching out the sermon a little brings understanding as its reward, it ought not to seem tiresome. You all know, of course, brothers, that these Jews before whom he changed his features are having a holiday today.¹ But if they who

¹ It was a Saturday.

lost Christ are having a pointless holiday, *we* ought to be having a fruitful holiday, spent in trying to understand Christ, who sent *them* away and came to *us*. None of this was done aimlessly.

There he was affecting, then. What does that mean? It means he had affection, which he showed by showing sympathy for our ailments; that is why he was willing to take our flesh on himself, in which to put death to death. Because of this fellow-feeling for us, this affection, it says he affected. That is why St Paul lashes certain people for being without affection, without mercy (Rom. I, 31). Where there is affection there is mercy. So Christ had mercy on us from on high. If he had not been willing to empty himself, and had just stayed in the form of God in which he is eternally equal to the Father, we would just have stayed eternally in death. But to set us free from the everlasting death which the sin of pride had brought us to, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the death, even the death of the cross. And because a man who is being crucified is stretched out on wood; and to make a drum, flesh—that is the hide—is stretched out on wood; it says he was drumming, that is he was being stretched out on wood and crucified. And he was affecting, treating us with such affection that he laid down his life for his sheep (John x, 15).

He was drumming at the doors of the city. We have a door which is opened so that we can believe in God, a door which we had shut against Christ and opened to the devil. But because we men had shut our minds against eternal life, and could not see the Word which the angels see, he the Lord our God set about opening the minds of mortal men with the cross; that is what it means, to say he was drumming at the doors of the city.

‘And he was being carried in his own hands.’ Now I just cannot see, brothers, how this could possibly happen with a man. Whoever carried himself in his own hands? By other people’s hands, yes, but no one could carry himself in his own. In fact it is impossible to make sense of this when applied literally to David; but it makes sense with Christ. Christ was being carried in his own hands, when he gave them his body and said, ‘This is my body’ (Matt. xxvi, 26). He was carrying that body in his hands. Such is the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ, a humility much to be recommended to men. He wants us to live up to it, brothers, to copy it, to strike Goliath, to conquer pride by clinging to

Christ; because 'he was falling at the doors of the gate'. He was falling means he was abasing himself in humility. At the doors of the gate means at the beginning of the faith by which we are saved. You can only begin at the beginning of faith, as it says in the Canticle, 'You will come and pass through from the beginning of faith' (Cant. IV. 8, LXX). One day we are going to come face to face; as St John writes, 'Beloved, we are God's sons, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is' (I John iii, 2). When will that be? When all this has passed away. And now listen to St Paul; 'We see now by a mirror in a riddle, but then it will be face to face' (I Cor. xiii, 12). Before we can see the Word face to face as the angels see him, we still need the doors of the gate at which the Lord fell down, humbling himself to the death.

Now what is this about spittle dribbling down his beard? Spittle as though to say baby-talk, because babies dribble. Wasn't it after all baby-talk to say 'Eat my flesh and drink my blood'? But behind these babyish words was hidden strength, which is what the beard stands for.

So now I think you have understood the title of this psalm. If I went on straight away to explain the psalm itself, I am afraid that what you have heard about the title would slip from your minds. But tomorrow is Sunday; so let us put it off till tomorrow, when I owe you another sermon, and you can have the pleasure then of hearing the text of the psalm explained to you.

(Concluded)



COMMENT

THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

being an adaptation of the leaflet issued by the Mother House at Sens

THE congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Eucharist, contemplatives of the Conventual Third Order, came into being on Christmas night, 1920, in the city of Sens, under the shadow of the ancient primatial cathedral of Gaul and Germany. That night the first Sisters of the Congregation, led by their foundress and in the presence of the priest

whom they look upon as their founder, celebrated their own birthday as well as that of our Blessed Lord. Shortly afterwards they learned that a new shoot had appeared on St Dominic's orange tree at Santa Sabina, the first new shoot since the one that appeared when Lacordaire re-established the Order in France in 1850. This at least was an encouraging presage, and indeed the three foundations, at Sens, at Servoz (in the Haute-Savoie) and at Nice, have begun to fulfil the initial hopes of providing centres of study and contemplation: a life dominated by the reading of God's holy Word and by the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The first convent was that of Sens, the cradle of the Congregation and the Noviciate. This fine building has been called 'a real masterpiece of modern architecture'. The first stone was laid on 22nd August, 1930, by Mgr Chesnelong, Archbishop of Sens. The consecration of the conventual church, with its double altar in the nave and the two other altars in the crypt, followed on 7th January, 1933. This was a great occasion for the Sisters, and the Order was well represented: most of the priors and the Provincial of the Province of France were present, as well as a large group of Students from Le Saulchoir, while the chant was executed by the Benedictines of Saint-Wandrille, who had become close friends of the new foundation.

A few years later the second convent was opened, at Servoz in the Haute-Savoie. The convent is magnificently situated opposite Mont Blanc, and commanding a view over the broad valley of the Arve, with its glacier water flowing far below. A house of recollection, study and prayer, it is dedicated to Our Lady of the Hills.

The third foundation is the recent convent at Nice, built on the hill called Ventabrun, a thousand feet above the town and overlooking the wonderful bay. The house stands in an olive grove, reminiscent of Gethsemani, and is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.

It was on the 10th May, 1921, that Pope Benedict XV issued his apostolic letter authorizing the new congregation. This was followed by a rescript addressed on the 18th June, 1923, to the Archbishop of Sens, authorizing the canonical erection of the Convent of the Nativity at Sens. And on 22nd September of the same year the Congregation was officially affiliated to the Dominican Order by the Master General.

These three convents express by their very architectural plan the ideals of the life of the Congregation. The plan is not that of an abbey, or of a usual Dominican priory, where the church so often forms one side of the cloister garth. The idea here is that the church is in the centre, and is flanked on either side by the monastic buildings, including the sisters' cells, the two sides meeting behind the altar, where the spacious library looks down through large arched windows on to the nuns' choir and the massive high altar. This novel plan was not inspired by a desire to produce something specially new or something specially beautiful, but its novelty and its beauty are derived from the idea of having the tabernacle as the centre of the whole life of the convent, and the rows of cells, each with its little oratory looking into the church, united in the library looking on to the choir and high altar: in this way the double Dominican ideal of prayer and study is realised in the very stones of the building. The life of the community is thus centred on Christ, both by the study of him in the Bible and Theology in cell and library, and in the adoration of him, present all the while, in the private oratories and the choir. Both prayer and study are conducted in his Eucharistic Presence. The study of Theology has been a characteristic of the Congregation from the beginning, and this was indeed something of an innovation, as Father Gillet, Master General of the Order, wrote to the Father founder: 'I hope', he wrote, 'that your work, possessing already the approval of the highest authority, will mark the beginning of a general reform, which will extend to all convents aiming at a genuine development of contemplative life.'

The life of the Dominican Sisters of the Eucharist is made up of several main elements, the chief of which is the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The poverty of the Sisters necessitates a certain measure of manual work, then there is the office in choir and the usual daily tasks, and the rule prescribes a special period for the study of Theology, as well as a single recreation, which is necessary to community life. When these things are done, they turn once more to silent converse with their Divine Master. Their life, their work and their study are thus penetrated with the spirit of prayer, silent prayer punctuated by the solemn chanting of the Divine Office in choir, fully sung on feast-days. It is also the practice of the communities to sing the *Veni Creator*

every day before Conventual Mass, and at the end of Mass to sing two antiphons, one for the Pope and one for the Order of St Dominic.

But the life of the Sisters also has its directly apostolic aspect. Their constant formation through the discipline of prayer and study makes them ready and properly equipped, when obedience demands it, to offer spiritual help to people who come to make private retreats at the convent, and indeed there are many who have found much consolation in the atmosphere of prayer and recollection, which for a few days they have been able to share with the Sisters.

At Servoz, in the Alps, the Sisters have many such visitors, including sometimes especially priests and religious who are in need of a rest, and who can find, together with the mountain air, spiritual refreshment in that quiet retreat. The guest house at Servoz also sometimes accommodates whole families and groups of children.

The house at Sens (105 rue Victor-Guichard) was severely damaged during the war, but the restoration is now (1957) almost complete, and visitors for private retreats are accommodated there once more.

The Congregation has had several requests for foundations in England, but the superiors have ruled that none shall be made until at least three English vocations have spent at least three years at the Mother House at Sens: a figure, however, which has never yet been reached.

The present article has been prepared on the basis of the French leaflet issued at Sens, to make more widely known a new and special aspect of Dominican life, and one which surely fulfils in a particularly Dominican way the ideal of the Order expressed in the motto *Contemplata aliis tradere*: 'to share with others the fruits of the contemplative life'. SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR FATHER EDITOR,

I was astonished at the peremptory style of your editorial in the June number, concerning my comment on the subject of the

baptism of converts. Since you have mentioned my name five times in trying to demolish my argument I must request you to give equal publicity to my reply. I may say that I see no reason to modify my original comment.

Your readers are entitled to know that Fr Hastings has no authority for his statement on the practice of the English clergy. He is resident abroad and not even incardinated in an English diocese. The responsibility is indeed grave, of a priest who, omitting conditional baptism, risks receiving into the Church a convert without being assured that his non-Catholic baptism was valid.

In my view the semi-political notion of stirring up public opinion, which you support, as a disciplinary corrective to the clergy, is to be repudiated on disciplinary and theological grounds. The Church was not founded as a kind of constitutional democracy, and where necessary it is for the hierarchy to issue admonitions on points of discipline.

I would draw your attention to the equivocation involved in speaking of 'public opinion residing in the minds of the faithful', which you state was brought into play in defining the dogma of the Assumption, and in relaxing the Eucharistic fast. Neither Dr Asmussen nor Fr Hastings makes use of 'public opinion' in this sense. And further, the term is inapplicable to the instances which you give. The Assumption was already universally taught by the ordinary magisterium of the Church, and was therefore a matter of belief and not of the *consensus* of public opinion. The Eucharistic fast was changed on the personal initiative of the Pope, for purely factual reasons. Your argument, therefore, and the reasons upon which it is based fall to the ground.

Yours, etc.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

Oxford,

17 June, 1957

We print the above in deference to Fr Farrell's wishes. We can only reiterate however what was said in our June Editorial; mildly, we had hoped, yet, as we thought, with sufficient clarity.

(a) We did not try to demolish Fr Farrell's argument, the substance of which was 'a clear and unequivocal statement of the law of the Church'. We simply pointed out that it was scarcely relevant to our

discussion which was not concerned 'to criticize or change the law, but to carry it out'.

(b) Fr Farrell's reflection that 'the responsibility is indeed grave of a priest who omitting conditional baptism, risks receiving a convert into the Church without being assured that his non-Catholic baptism was valid', shows that he still does not perceive this. His implication is that Fr Hastings and the Editor were advocating the undertaking of this grave responsibility. In fact we did just the opposite. Fr Farrell's sentiment though unexceptionable is misleadingly irrelevant.

(c) The fact that Fr Hastings is studying in one of the English Colleges in Rome and does not belong to an English diocese is hardly proof that he has no authority for his statements.

(d) The sense in which the Editor used 'public opinion' was that of Dr Asmussen, in his original article; viz. 'public opinion within the Catholic communion', i.e. residing in the minds of the faithful. Fr Farrell takes this phrase, gives it a quite different meaning, which he dubs Protestant, and more ambiguously semi-political, and foists it on Dr Asmussen, who did not mean that by it, and on Fr Hastings, who never used it at all.

(e) The Editor's attention is drawn to what Fr Farrell believes to be an equivocation. He is mistaken. He forgets that in the historical process that culminated in the definition of the Assumption that dogma began by being an opinion in the minds of the faithful. The same is true of the Immaculate Conception. 'The Eucharistic fast was changed on the personal initiative of the Pope for purely factual reasons', but does it follow from this that the expressed wishes and needs of the faithful in respect of those facts carried no weight in the making of the change?

No further comment on this subject will be published.—EDITOR.



EXTRACTS

SCRIPTURE, the Quarterly of the Catholic Biblical Association, should be regularly read at least by priests, nuns and all in any way engaged in teaching the Faith. It expounds the Scriptures to the non-specialist in a way that sets the Bible in its right place as the groundwork of doctrinal teaching.

The present number, July 1957, is a sample of the good things this review invariably contains, all *ad rem* in regard to the general theme of the July and August numbers of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

In this connection we draw attention to an interesting Question and Answer on the problem of why Galileo was condemned, when the Church admits that the Bible does not set out to teach science. The Editor uses the incident, in his answer, to illustrate how the unchanging truths of Faith are at all times set in the context of changing and increasing new scientific knowledge. What is revealed, itself changeless in essence, has to be seen and understood against this ever changing background:

'Biblical and consequently theological language had been linked with the ancient astronomy for a thousand years, and there had been no reason to distinguish between theological truths and the traditional terms in which those truths were conveyed. The appearance of the Copernican system provided the reason for, and indeed demanded, such a distinction; but it would be most unreasonable to expect that this should be realized immediately. . . . The treasures of God's revealed truths are only gradually appreciated in all their richness and the Church increases her appreciation by laborious efforts, which are stimulated and greatly assisted by the difficulties she is called upon to face. The Galileo incident may well serve to mark the beginning of a long period which proved so fruitful in the growth of this appreciation, precisely because it marked the beginning of a period when the rapid development of the sciences presented so many difficulties of this kind. And perhaps the truth of faith which profited more than any other as a result of this period is the inspiration of the Scriptures.'

The review by the Editor of an important book is also interesting in the same connection; it is *The Two-Edged Sword*, an Interpretation of the Old Testament by John L. McKenzie, S.J. (The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1956.) Fr McKenzie shows how the O.T. is the foundation and starting point of the New. The Sacred History in it records God's dealings with his chosen people, and these foreshadow God's dealings with the human race in Redemption. It is important for a true understanding of this to know of what kind this Sacred History is:

'What we call the "historical books" of the Old Testament contain the traditions of the ancient Hebrews about themselves; some traditions are nearer to the events, some are more remote, but they are all "stories"' (p. 4). 'The storyteller is not satisfied with a bare recital of names; his characters must live, and their actions must take on movement and realism. Therefore he tells us what they felt, what they said, what they did, what they wore, and such things, even though he has no memory of these details. Were he an historian, he ought not to do this; but he would stand astonished

if we were to tell him so. I, he would tell us, am a storyteller, not an historian; I do not know what you mean by an historian. If people want lists of names and dates, let them look at the royal archives; I tell them the story. . . . These are the stories which pass by word of mouth from generation to generation; not history, nor yet fiction, even if they are memories fleshed out by creative imagination' (pp. 61-62). 'We hesitate to attribute storytelling to God, because we fear we shall charge him with "historical error". Such a charge ignores the very nature of the story as we all know it. "Historical fact" and "historical error" are modern concepts, formulated by modern historical science and defined in terms of that science and its methods, these concepts would have been unintelligible to the storyteller' (pp. 63-64).

The reviewer then comments:

In this book will be found the perfect prescription for the cure of that modern disease which we may call 'historicism', a disease which renders so many incapable of reading the Scriptures (or, for that matter, the legends of the Saints) to their profit. In the same clear and convincing manner, the author discusses the question of cosmic and human origins, and lays to rest the spectres conjured up by modern scientific research into the origins of the world and of man, which have been so long dreaded as threats to the opening chapters of Genesis.

These principles are concretely illustrated in an article on *The Sacrifice of Isaac* also by Fr McKenzie. This piece of 'history' gives rise to a moral difficulty in the eyes of the modern reader, teacher and hearer. How could God have commanded human sacrifice? The findings of modern scientific criticism are enlisted to show the origins of the story (Genesis 22). Its different local and temporal strata, and its differing purposes—topographical, liturgical and hagiographical—are analysed, and its literary character shown to share that of all the pentateuchal traditions; it has lived and grown with Israel and been adapted for different purposes at different times. Its final purpose, as it appears in Genesis, is to set forth God's condemnation of child sacrifice and to base on divine revelation the Hebrew custom of redeeming the first-born by substitution. Further, it is used to represent the great climatic crisis in the life of Abraham which precedes the realization of the promise and elicits supreme faith and pure hope.

REVIEWS

MEISTER ECKHART SPEAKS. Edited and introduced by Otto Karrer. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s.)

Since Eckhart is among the greatest of Friars Preachers, the Order has a special responsibility for his reputation. That is the first reason for welcoming even so slight a book as this from a publishing house associated with the Order. Eckhart's teaching was censured by the Church, but, so far as we know, he died in submission to the Church and protesting the orthodoxy of his intentions. Born before the death of St Thomas, whose influence must have pervaded his youth, and trained in the highest Dominican tradition in the great schools of Cologne and Paris, Eckhart took this tradition into the pulpit; not of course for the first time, but in a strikingly original and impressive way: uniting deep and daring thought with gloriously radiant, vigorous and pungent language. He is one of the creators of the German language. His influence formed Bd Henry Suso and Tauler and has continued to run deep and wide down to our own time. It is now as strong as ever and, thanks to modern scholarship, is less contaminated than ever before with historical errors: religious people outside the Church are as likely as ever to feel Eckhart's attraction, but they have less excuse than their predecessors for any facile assimilation of him to protestantism or pantheism. This good result is partly due to Dominican scholarship (Denifle and Théry). From another point of view, what may be called Eckhart's apostolic function appears precisely in this continual attraction which his teaching exerts on non-Catholic minds.

These remarks may partly illustrate what I have ventured to call the Order's responsibility towards Eckhart. The scholars have done good work; the theologians seem to be less enterprising. We need to recover and re-think, critically and in the light of St Thomas and his commentators, the unsystematized insights of so great and so dangerous a master. The difficulty of the task, far from daunting, ought to encourage us. In the apostolic field of intellectual charity towards our non-Catholic and indeed non-Christian contemporaries, there are surely few, if any, tasks more worthy of being undertaken; or in which we are more likely to be met half way; and even in this field, after all, two heads are better than one.

As for the little book under review, the editor's aim is apparently to give the pith of Eckhart's spiritual teaching, but in a devotional, not a scholarly way. This distinction seems to be drawn too sharply. If you want to 'study' Eckhart, you are referred, in the first lines of the

Introduction, to another more learned work 'which is being prepared by the same publisher'. The same as what? We are not told. Is it inappropriately student-ish to wonder why? And the same questions recur on every page of the little anthology of texts which follows. There is not a single reference; you never know where you are in terms of sermon or treatise; which seems to me a serious defect, even in an unpretentious booklet like this.

Because, in the first place, there will surely be some readers, and these not always the least 'devotional' and certainly not the least intelligent, who would like to follow the texts back into their contexts, not only to understand these particular ones better, but in general to get to know Eckhart better. In other words, an anthology is surely unsatisfactory in the degree that it cannot serve as an introduction; and this one can only imperfectly serve as such, because, as I say, the texts never point explicitly beyond themselves. They are just there, out of the blue, in a sort of void. It would have been a trifling addition, surely, to the work of editor or translator to supply those useful pointers. Besides, the texts themselves sometimes clamour for an elucidation which their wider context might at least begin to provide. Eckhart, we know, is a difficult author—paradoxical, epigrammatic, given to bold strokes apt to take a theologian's breath away or at least raise his eyebrows. It would seem only fair to theological readers—and aren't all readers of Eckhart at least inchoate theologians?—as well as to Eckhart himself, to enable them to place such audacities in some sort of context. It is not only a question of isolated 'audacities', like the unqualified remark that 'God is nameless'—against which see St Thomas, Ia, xiii *passim*. There are also two cases of apparent contradiction; where one statement is followed on the same page by another that seems to cancel it: e.g. on p. 37 we read that every sin 'whether mortal or venial . . . will have to be accounted for in time and in eternity', whereas six lines on we are told that when a man repents 'he has, in the eyes of God, never sinned nor will God for one moment make man suffer for his past offences'. In other places it is the apparent clumsiness of the translation which makes one want to check the text against some reliable edition. In general the translation reads as if the person responsible were unfamiliar with good English; there is an un-English riot of capital letters, especially for adjectives.

With these reservations one may commend the book as a first dip into the Eckhartian ocean. It is noticeable, incidentally, that much of Eckhart's 'audacity' is omitted; in particular there is very little here of those characteristic developments on the union of the soul with God the Son which, in certain sermons, go well beyond the bounds of normal Catholic language. Where Eckhart's originality does flash out

it is usually, here, a result of his expressing the *extreme* consequence of some truth. For example: 'Real humility makes a man conscious of his nature; a something created out of nothing . . . he is now as little able to attribute to his own credit the good actions which God works in him as he was before he was created.'

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

NEW ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY. Edited by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre. (S.C.M. Press; 21s.)

METAPHYSICAL BELIEFS. By Stephen Toulmin, Ronald Hepburn and Alasdair MacIntyre. (S.C.M. Press; 25s.)

MYSTERY AND PHILOSOPHY. By Michael Foster. (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

Among the most interesting volumes of this *Library of philosophy and theology* are those in which English philosophers have turned their attention to the analysis of theological statements. Of course no new movement is ever entirely new, and some of the problems now being faced were put and answered in the middle ages, which shared our inclination for linguistic analysis: but every age that is to avoid sterility must find its own formulation of the questions, and its own version of the answers. If the modern questioning sometimes seems rather radical, we may remember that a well-known article of the *Summa Theologica* begins 'videtur quod Deus non sit'.

Mr Foster's book is itself an attempt to assess the worth of the movement. He suggests that linguistic philosophy has more in common with Christian thought than had the Greek-inspired philosophy of former days. The contrast of Jew and Greek is an old theme, but is not overplayed; unfortunately Mr Foster prefers to present even the simplest ideas in other people's words, which makes his work rather indigestible.

The essays of *Metaphysical Beliefs* put the problem which is central to any theology. Since the mysteries of God's kingdom cannot be directly expressed, how can we get outside the closed circle of irreducibly 'mythological language'; how can we show the validity of the parables we are bound to use? In essays called *Poetry and religious belief* and *The logical status of religious belief*, Mr Hepburn and Mr MacIntyre are not so much offering a solution as displaying the complexity of the problem and eliminating false approaches—which is in some ways a more valuable thing to do.

New Essays is now some two years old, pioneer work on which the later books partly depend. The central theme is the same: how can we locate God in revelation? Mr Crombie, in an interesting study, suggests that 'statements about God are in effect parables which are referred out of our experience in a certain direction'; the subject of these statements

is given by natural theology, and only the predicates are parabolic in character. The trouble is that 'God' is not a proper name, it functions logically as a predicate (*S.T.* I.13.9), so that I do not think natural theology can have this privileged position: it asserts the same mystery as faith does, only faith 'presents us with more and better effects' (I.12.13 ad 1) in which to see that mystery.

The best of the other essays in the volume can be grouped round this one. Mr Hepburn's criticism of Bultmann, for example, or the collection that deals with natural theology itself—the articles of Professor Hughes and Mr Rainer usefully clear up the muddles in the earlier ones. The theme recurs in Professor Flew's examination of the problem of evil; the 'free-will defence' at which he tilts is perhaps really a windmill, but one that flaps its sails vigorously and deserves to fall. *New Essays* is an uneven book, containing contributions it is kinder not to mention, but it is vigorous and alive, and worth bringing to the attention of those who do not know it.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

A LETTER TO HIS SISTER. By St Aelred of Rievaulx. Edited by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker. (Mowbrays; 5s.)

MEDITATIONS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. By an Augustinian. Translated and edited by a religious of C.S.M.V. (Mowbrays; 4s.)

Two further works in this attractively produced and priced series of devotional works. The middle-English version of St Aelred's letter has been modernized with the success that can be expected of these competent translators. In the main it is a meditation on the gospel, which they rightly call 'one of the most moving ever written'. For example:

'Now after this, go up with your Lady to the hill where Elizabeth and the blessed Mary met together with many a sweet embrace. And here watch carefully, Sister, how John the Baptist hopped for joy in his mother's womb. See how he knew and saluted his Lord like a servant, his King like a knight, and the fount of all righteousness as a crier salutes a judge. And blessed were those wombs, and blessed shall they always be, from which the salvation of the world sprung out with mirth and joy to drive away the darkness of woe and sorrow which hitherto had reigned.'

This is completely felt, not emotionally bogus like its numerous nineteenth-century descendants, from which so many souls still have to try and work up their devotion. For all that it seems to me that medieval piety does have more in common with that of the nineteenth century than with our own; that even in its first Cistercian freshness this psychological approach is less congenial to us than the impersonal

writings of the fathers, so much closer, we now realize, to the gospel tradition itself.

The meditations addressed to the Holy Spirit have been selected from a work popular in the English fourteenth century. The translator here has been less successful in avoiding tiresome archaisms and unnecessary capital letters. A special devotion to the Holy Spirit must be rare today, and could with advantage replace many of the countless ones which are available. But this curious and loosely-written work is hardly likely to bring it about.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE STATE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Oscar Cullmann. (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

The opposition of temporal and spiritual power, at least as old as the *Antigone* and cast by history in the last four centuries between the two competing corporations of Church and State, is here judiciously presented in its New Testament setting. Four lectures carefully argue that the Christian ideal appears from direct statements in the Gospels, not merely by indirect inference from them, and is consistently maintained, despite difference of emphasis, by the Epistles and Apocalypse.

Neither the Pharisees and Zealots nor the Sadducees and Herodians, in other words neither the members of the resistance movement nor the collaborationists found support from our Lord. Some of his followers were extremists, thus Simon Zelotes, possibly Judas Iscariot, not impossibly Peter and the sons of Zebedee. *Sicarii*, cut-throats, the administrators called them as we now speak of terrorists or the underground or the *maquis*; they aimed to overthrow Roman rule and establish a Jewish theocracy. For this cause was our Lord wrongly condemned by Pontius Pilate, according to the inscription on the Cross, but it was expressly rejected by him as a satanic temptation.

For he was not the Messiah if that meant a victorious national leader who identified the Kingdom of God with instant earthly dominion, but rather the Son of Man foretold by Daniel and the Servant of God sung by the Deutero-Isaiah. He consorted with tax-gatherers and the army of occupation and never preached civil disobedience, though he spoke of the pretensions of rulers with irony and taught that the State was provisional, not a final institute worthy of divine honours.

For Professor Cullmann the Church, the *politeuma* of the coming age, is false to itself when it adopts means belonging to the *polis* of the present secular State. His is not the mind of Innocent III, nor yet of Pius VII. He is no political escapist, however, for he recognizes that the State maintains a certain dignity in an order willed by God and has

angelic forces behind it. If he does not affirm this world he does not deny it. The social dualism of the Christian is not between this worldliness and otherworldliness, it is a chronological dualism between the present and the future. This goes to explain how St Paul could command subjection to the powers that prevail over us and St John condemn Rome as the beast from the abyss. We must pay our taxes, but not render to the State the things that are God's.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE. By Dom Chautard, O.C.R. (M. H. Gill, Dublin.)

This re-issue of Dom Chautard's *Soul of the Apostolate* makes available a work which is concerned, not with particular forms of the Apostolate but with any form of the Apostolate, that is, with any form of handing on the Gospel message. Now, whether this message is handed on by preaching the Word, or by deeds of mercy, the Apostle must be active. The purpose of this book is that apostolic activity may be supernatural activity. And for activity to be supernatural there must be a supernatural source. Only if the source is supernatural, will activity produce supernatural results. The supernatural source is the interior life of prayerful union with our Lord.

But a tension between interior life and apostolic activity is sometimes apparent to the zealous worker for souls. This book tries to remove such tension. And it does so, not by banishing necessary activity, nor by subtracting the interior life, but by establishing order and due subordination. The author insists that the interior life must come first because by it the apostle, be he priest, religious or lay-person, is enabled to live intimately with God and thus he draws on the Source of grace. This is a practical conclusion drawn from reflection on the words 'Without me you can do nothing'. Although the interior life is placed first, the active life is not depreciated because the active life is seen as mirroring the overflowing liberality of God, and as willed by God. Further, the active life is seen as a special means of sanctification if the works performed are undoubtedly willed by God, and are not taken up for any motive other than for the glory of God. Thus a balance is struck and maintained between interior life and apostolic activity. It is not a case of the one or the other, but of both in harmony, because both are necessary in the Apostolate.

The author held that the tension, which he tried to remove, could be felt by the keen apostle in the form of doubts. Is it lazy, or selfish, or neglectful of the needs of souls, if one devotes time to prayer, study and spiritual reading? Ought not these exercises to be cut down so that more time could be given to external works? These doubts receive

balanced answers both in terms of principles and by means of actual concrete examples. And thus the author points to his contention which is summed up in his epilogue. 'Thus the soul devoted to the highest of works, the apostolate, must live with God in order to be able to speak of him with the best results for souls: the active life, let us repeat it once more, should be in the Christian soul only the overflow of its interior life.'

The book does not teach new spirituality. It contains the traditional teaching on the relations between the interior and the active life. One finds this teaching in treatises on the spiritual life. But in such full treatises the contention of this book is found '*inter alia*'. The value of this book lies in its clear application of one relevant aspect of spirituality to the essential needs of the apostolate.

All keen workers in the apostolate should be grateful to the publishers for the reprinting of this book. If there is to be a second edition then perhaps the publishers will not take it amiss if attention is drawn to misprints on pages 79 line 5, 104 line 33, and 176 line 11.

GILBERT COXHEAD, O.P.

MANY ARE ONE. By Leo Trese. (Geoffrey Chapman; 10s. 6d.)

If you have a blind prejudice against American style and therefore refuse to read this book, you are very foolish. The first purpose of any book is to express ideas and this one—though less than 150 pages—is full of excellent ideas simply and directly expressed. It is perhaps unfair to make a single quotation when one could make so many. Yet there is one which seems very characteristic of the straightforward truths put in simple unaffected language. Having dealt with many things, including prayer, the Mass, Baptism and Confirmation, the author speaks with simple force on marriage. With profound truth he writes (page 112): 'It is a magnificent thing, this threefold partnership of Christian marriage—husband and wife and God. God stands by with his creative hand outstretched, as husband and wife embrace in an act of reciprocal love. And at the instant that new life begins within the mother's womb, God summons a new soul out of the abyss of nothingness and unites it to the microscopic body that has begun to form.' How true and how necessary it is that we should see the marriage act from so simple and yet so supernatural a viewpoint. The whole book is like this: positive and utterly true. One can see the true source in the author's dedication to his parents 'and to all Catholic mothers and fathers'. Thank God for plain simple and profound truth. I venture to suggest that this is a really important book. Once again Father Trese has enriched the library of genuine and practical spiritual reading.

DOMINIC SIRE, O.P.